

Q&A

ALICIA SILVERSTONE

THE 1995 HIT comedy *Clueless* cemented Alicia Silverstone's status as a star, but it also affected her life in a more profound way. During filming, Silverstone, who was 18 then, adopted Sampson, a scrappy mutt she found on the streets of Los Angeles.

It was Sampson who inspired Silverstone to spend time in animal shelters. "There were days where I literally thought my heart would break," she says, remembering the urge to bring all the animals home with her. Before long, she was educating herself about other animal protection issues. "I saw millions of animals around the world, on farms, in forests ... [who] were suffering, and they were just as soulful as my beloved dogs and cats. I made up my mind once and for all to stop using my dollars to purchase meat and other products that are created through violence or cruelty."

In 2009, Silverstone shared her message of compassionate living through her book *The Kind Diet*. She also launched *thekindlife.com* website "for like-minded people to gather and share advice for living the healthiest, kindest life possible."

In this edited interview with staff writer Ruthanne Johnson, Silverstone discusses family life, animal advocacy and her recently published book, *The Kind Mama*.

How do you and your husband teach your kind life philosophy to your son, Bear?

We try to lead by example. Bear sees us making choices on a daily basis that benefit our planet. Someday he will have to make his choices all on his own, but I hope that the foundation we give him will inspire him to continue along this path.

Why did you write *The Kind Mama*?

I saw some women in my life having the most blissful experiences with pregnancy, birth and motherhood. That was so inspiring to me and in stark contrast to what we've come to accept as normal: pregnancies full of ailments and less-than-ideal deliveries. I began researching and speaking with experts. My goal was to provide women with a guide to have that blissful experience and to show families that they can set their children up to be a generation of healthy, happy and compassionate individuals.

What are the biggest challenges in animal advocacy work?

Getting people to accept the awful truth about what is happening and the simple fact that their choices can help end or perpetuate it. That said, I think we've made great strides. I remember going on Letterman many years ago and saying that I was a vegan and being received like I was an alien. But now it's actually cool to be a vegan.

What's next?

I'm working on my next book, *The Kind Diet Cookbook*. As an actress, I am always on the lookout for interesting roles, but my most important role is the one I play within my family. I want to ensure I'm being the best mom and woman I can be.



ANYONE WHO'S EVER had a pet disappear knows the panic and despair that accompanies losing a beloved companion. *Four-Legged Miracles: Heartwarming Tales of Lost Dogs' Journeys Home* by Brad Steiger and Sherry Hansen Steiger is packed with stories of canines who managed to fight the odds and find their way home. They include dogs like Bobbie, a collie mix, and Nick, an Alsatian, who braved 3,000- and 2,000-mile treks home, respectively, after going missing during family trips. Accounts of those who helped Bobbie along the way revealed that the dog's six-month trek was like a canine version of *The Odyssey*. While the authors provide theories regarding a sort of innate canine GPS, dog lovers will suspect at least part of what propelled these animals onward is their indelible bond with their humans.



WHEN A NAÏVE HORSE LOVER enters the world of racing with her thoroughbred, it isn't long before she glimpses the unglamorous side of the "sport of kings." *Saving Baby* by Jo Anne Normile and Lawrence Lindner chronicles the greed, deception and cruelty Normile witnesses in training barns and on the track. "I had worked so hard in the beginning to cultivate friendships with people on the backstretch," Normile writes. "... But so many of those very same people, I learned more and more, couldn't have cared less about horses." When her beloved Baby suffers a fatal



injury on an ill-maintained track, Normile turns her attention from racing to rescuing. *Saving Baby* provides an inspiring account of her efforts to save the racing industry's discards—the thousands of healthy horses who too often end up in foreign slaughterhouses.